

# LATIN NOTES

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Address communications to FRANCES E. SABIN, Director of the Bureau

Issued in the interests of teachers of secondary Latin and Greek

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## EXCERPTS FROM AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT"

By MONROE E. DEUTSCH, Vice President and Provost, University of California

Taken from The Library Journal, July, 1933.

Human nature has not changed in the centuries, however great the scientific discoveries and however much the conveniences of living have been improved.

For this reason, the proposals that our educational system should be wholly reconstructed, with overwhelming emphasis on science, are by no means as logical as some may think. Certainly, it is important to know much of the world about us, the heavens above us, and of our own physical selves—yet far more important is attention to the things that make us human beings—rather than animals. And the place in which this knowledge is preserved and conserved is in those collections of sheets of paper we call books.

Once we thought of the humanities as meaning Greek and Latin. Certainly, I am one of the last to forget our debt to the writings of Greece and Rome. But the term should by no means be restricted to books written in Greek and Latin. Surely, a tongue that gave us Dante, a tongue that gave us Goethe, a tongue that gave us Shakespeare, a tongue that gave us Molière—these have a full right to demand that such works be placed on the shelf entitled "The Humanities." For great writers are like searchlights that pick out significant aspects of human life and set them in clear view.

No, I am not thinking of books as tools to external knowledge. Neither am I thinking of them as agreeable means of passing the time, methods of forgetting the unpleasantnesses and dullness of life. Surely, this is not a use to be disparaged. Such an anodyne is far better than many others that men have used. And if the miracle of the printed page sweeps one away on a magic carpet to other lands and other interests, and converts the bare attic into a palace of the mind, it has indeed done well.

But I am thinking of books as repositories of ideas, treasuries of distilled wisdom about human beings, their thoughts and their acts. And surely if a given

work has retained its place among the aristocracy of literature—the "blue books," as it were—it must have in it much of value to us of today.

Indeed, it is from one of them—two thousand years old—that we can obtain the truest defense (if it needs such) of letters. I refer to the famous quotation from Cicero's speech in defense of the poet Archias: speaking of literature, the orator says:

"Other enjoyments are not suited to all seasons, all times of life, all places; the study of literature stimulates us in boyhood, delights us in old age, is an ornament in prosperity, a comfort and a refuge in adversity, a joy at home, no hindrance abroad; it helps us through sleepless nights, it goes with us on our travels and is our companion in the country."

Hundreds, nay thousands, of illustrations of the truth of these statements can be found along the path of the centuries. The pigskin library of Theodore Roosevelt on his African explorations is matched by the copy of Homer which Thomas Lawrence bore with him on his Arabian campaigns.

What is the aim of this whole elaborate business of education? If it is for the purpose of making ideal citizens, we cannot claim that it has proved to be an unqualified success. How many of our high school graduates sit down and study the problems confronting the government so that they may understand them thoroughly? As a whole, do our school or college graduates speak much, if any, more intelligently on such questions than those who have failed to have such opportunities?

We talk about the absence of religion in our younger generation. Do you stop to think of the degree to which the spiritualizing elements are being left out of education? Great literature, be it in English, German, French, Italian, Greek, or Latin, is the greatest of all spiritual teachers—save for the Bibles of the various peoples.

How much thought do we give to the spirit within this "prison of the body" (as another great Roman called it)?—We emphasize English composition, so that we may write: "Yours of the twenty-fifth received and contents noted." History and civics are often taught so that pupils may become familiar with the

method of electing the president, or receive distorted notions of the place of our country in the history of the world. We demand physical education so that the body may be well cared for. We encourage Spanish on the ground that the boy may hereafter have business dealings with Mexico and South America. These are all perfectly worthy aims—but, I repeat, what do they have to do with the spirit? which is, I take it, the part of man that makes him superior to the beast, and should be of far more concern to us all than the mechanism we call the body. In short, our education tends to be practical, material, and contemporary.

Books show us that truth is not new, not modern. Said Woodrow Wilson:

"It is our privilege to be calm and know that the truth has not changed; that old wisdom is more to be desired than any new nostrum; that we must neither run with the crowd nor deride it, but seek sober counsel for it and for ourselves."

In all sincerity, do we say, "Blessings on him who first invented books."

Very close indeed to us, and as full of poignancy as when written, are the words which the great poet Propertius put into the mouth of the dead Roman matron, Cornelia, as she addresses her husband, Paulus, whom along with her children she leaves behind her (the translation, poor as it is, is my own):

"Now I commend to you our children, common pledges of our love.

This anxious care still breathes on, burned in my ashes. Perform, oh! father, a mother's duty;

All that little crowd of my offspring you will have to bear on your neck.

When you give kisses to them 'mid their tears, add a mother's.

And if you are to grieve at all, do it without them as witnesses.

When they come, deceive their kisses with dry cheeks."

What is there in these words that fails to have meaning and to touch us today? The human heart and its affections are not essentially altered by electric light or a knowledge of electrons. There is, indeed, a place in the modern world for spiritual teachings. We should therefore play our part in making mankind see, understand, and relish great literature. It is not the amount men read or the number of hours they give to it—but its quality that counts.

And strangely enough great literature (in whatever language it is written) has much in common. One who has been taught to love great works of literature in Greek will, I feel confident, prefer Lincoln's Gettysburg Address to Fannie Hurst. The great writings, whether they be Woodrow Wilson's addresses or Willa Cather's novels, appeal to a taste that is cultivated. Whether the historical scholar will agree or not, I do not know—but to me there is a profound appeal in Woodrow Wilson's words, "The history of nations is spiritual, not material, a thing, not of institutions, but of the heart and the imagination." And even further does he go when he says, "It is to get at the spirits of men that the university is created: to my mind it is not to make scholars."

Certainly, one of the most important functions of all of us who deal with youth, whether we be called educators or educate under the less obvious name of librarian, is to take youth by the hand and lead it into the realm of great literature—so that it will instinctively choose the better rather than the worse.

Obviously, we cannot learn all necessary languages sufficiently well to appreciate their great works of literature. But it is well to remember how insoluble the problem of translation is and how often the task is essayed by pygmies who obviously cannot succeed in raising themselves to the height from which the eyes of the genius looked. The failure to realize this caused one critic to say, when an early series of translations from the Greek and Latin was issued: "Now the classics are indeed exposed."

When we think of the many shelves full of works of the first order, we all of us acknowledge readily how small our own acquaintance (not to say knowledge) of great literature is.

Having, however, made at least a part of it ours, let us resolutely lead others to the sources of inspiration. We need not do it very consciously, for if the works have meant anything to us, we shall spontaneously give the stimulus to others.

These, my friends, are black days—not merely because business is poor and salaries reduced, but chiefly because hosts of men and women are starving, because society is throwing overboard so many of the precious heritages of the past, the things that alone make civilization civilized, because in times of such abject misery men insist on adding to it many fold by sharpening the weapons of Mars, by fanning the flames of a jealous, narrow nationalism, and by tearing off all the coverings of tolerance and friendship that the centuries have provided, to stand forth naked savages bent on destroying those of another nation or another creed. Yes, the clouds are heavy, the storms are about us.

At such a time let us heed the words of the noble souls who have lived before us. Few have been the times when we so needed to ponder what they have said; seldom has humanity so needed to have its thoughts turned away from the material world which we have made so bleak, to the treasures of the spirit.

Books fulfill their noblest function when the little black characters we call letters minister to the need, not for entertainment, not for knowledge, but for the nourishment of the human spirit.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Professor Roy C. Flickinger, head of the Department of Latin and Greek at the State University of Iowa, has been appointed chairman of a special committee of the American Classical League which will initiate and coordinate plans for a nation-wide celebration in 1935 of the bimillenary of the birth of Horace. Dr. Flickinger is calling a luncheon conference to be held at the Washington Hotel in Washington, D. C. on Friday,



Gift  
Gertrude Brock  
8-21-1935  
v. 11, no. 3-4, 7-8

December 29, in connection with the annual meeting of the American Philological Association, the Archaeological Institute of America, and the Linguistic Society, at which time plans for various activities in this country will be discussed along with a tentative itinerary for the Horatian Pilgrimage and the Classical Cruise in the Mediterranean.

W. L. CARR, *President*  
American Classical League

In Bulletin No. 17, 1932, Monograph No. 24, entitled *Instruction in Foreign Languages*, sent out from the Office of Education, United States Department of the Interior, readers will find on pages 34-52 an interesting account of the Classical Investigation, culminating in a Report in 1924, with emphasis upon its constructive side and the ways in which various schools have been seeking to follow its recommendations.

Two Roman Calendars for 1934 have been sent to the Service Bureau for display. One has been prepared by Harriet Echternach and may be secured by sending 60 cents to her at 609 Second Avenue, Sterling, Illinois. The other is a 1934 edition of the calendar which Helen S. MacDonald brought out in 1932 and 1933, both widely known for their attractive appearance. She will continue to sell these for 60 cents each. Orders should be sent to her at the Shippen School, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and, if desired, she will mail them as Christmas presents directly to persons whose names and addresses have been forwarded by friends.

Before leaving the subject of calendars, the editor would like to suggest that teachers examine a piece of advertising material sent out by The Macmillan Company in connection with the names of their Latin texts. It presents a striking illustration of a Roman Calendar, with information attached.

Mr. A. Teitel announces that since the death of George Kleine he is managing the Kleine Film Classics at 804 South Wabash Ave., Chicago, and that catalogues are available.

The Italian Tourist Information Office has sent to the Service Bureau a limited supply of booklets which contain many beautiful pictures of places in Italy and Sicily, many of which can be used in pupils' note books or on wall posters. They may be obtained from the Service Bureau for 10 cents each, this price covering postage and handling expenses. The titles run as follows: 1. Rome of Mussolini; 2. Roma nel Decennale (Rome in the tenth year of Fascist rule); 3. Roma—the Via dell' Impero; 4. A large (folded) map of modern Rome; 5. The Dead Cities of Italy—Ostia; 6. Classical Cities of Sicily; 7. The Latest Archaeological Discoveries in Italy.

The Classical Bulletin for November, 1933, published by the Loyola University Press, 3441 North Ashland Avenue, Chicago, contains a dramatization in English of Iliad I in three acts, with the title "The Song of Alpha." The signature at the end is Shadowbrook Juniorate, West Stockbridge, Mass.

## BOOKS

T. E. Shaw's Translation of the Odyssey may be secured from the Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Avenue, New York, for \$3.50. It has met with much enthusiasm since its publication, and the fact that Thomas Lawrence (the author) carried a copy of Homer with him during his campaign in Arabia adds greatly to the interest it has aroused.

A novel entitled *The Green Scamander*, written by Maude Meagher, and concerned largely with the Amazons, has been presented to the Service Bureau by the Houghton and Mifflin Publishing Company. It sells for \$2.00.

## A LETTER AND THE EDITOR'S REPLY

*Dear Madam:*

In my recent strolls around the city of New York, I have made some startling and happy discoveries. In West Fifty-seventh Street, the Art Students League has inscribed on the bulletin board the motto, "Nulla Dies Sine Linea." The Knox Hat Stores all have on their windows the words "Moveo et Proficio." In a certain Art Shop in downtown New York I read the inscription, "Pulchritudo Lucifera." When about to choose a cigar last week, I beheld before me on the box a fancy crest above which was written, "Nemo Me Impune Lacessit." I entered a Meat Market recently, and there met my gaze a jar of corned beef, the product of a well-known concern, with the motto, "Nostrum Genus Optimum." I might continue indefinitely, but I do not wish to be long-winded.

I am contemplating the preparation of a pamphlet containing such "finds" in New York as I have indicated. Does this idea seem interesting to you?

*Dear Mr. C——:*

I have always wanted to find some person who would enjoy doing just what you have started, namely, to make a collection of Latin mottoes and expressions which your eyes chanced to see as you were strolling about the city. My own experience in this connection has been rich ever since my first "find," many years ago, of the Latin motto (which you mention) in the window of the Knox Hat Shop. I feel that I ought not to tell you that such was my delight that I entered the shop and bought a hat at a price which my slender purse did not warrant. But I still have the band with the words, "Moveo et Proficio."

## UPON THE DEATH OF MY LADY'S SPARROW

By CATULLUS

A little thing to mourn, a scant handful  
Of throbbing life, snatched away by Death.  
Poor little bird! Oh, cold, cruel breath  
That chills all loveliness in life,  
Why did you bear away this tiny thing  
Whose sole offense lay in its love to sing?  
My sweetheart used to place it in her lap,  
And there it would remain the livelong day,  
Content, if it could only chirp its way  
About. Now, it has taken the long road  
To that place from whence there is no return.  
Its mistress' eyes will nevermore discern  
The eager flutters of her little pet.  
Surely, gods, your heavenly plan is wrong  
When Death has power enough to end a song!

Translated by Marie Bell, Senior in the Curtis High School, New York.

## SUGGESTION FOR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

If 20 people would send to the Service Bureau before December 15th \$5.00 each for supporting membership in the American Classical League, an eight-page edition of LATIN NOTES could be published for the January issue. This would bring pleasure not only to the Editor and her staff, but to many readers who have voiced regrets at the limitations of space made necessary by the depression.

## SERVICE BUREAU MATERIAL AVAILABLE

*This material appears in mimeographed or printed form. In the case of the former, the items may be borrowed with the understanding that the teacher pays the postage and returns the material within two weeks after its receipt, or they may be purchased for 5 cents each unless another price is stated. Printed items, however, known as LATIN NOTES SUPPLEMENTS and BULLETINS, are not sent out as loans but must be purchased at the prices indicated. The material is listed in Leaflets published at the end of each school year, and containing a summary of items which have been announced in the LATIN NOTES for the year. These Leaflets are sent out free of charge.*

### I. In Mimeographed Form

(Numbering is continued from the November issue.)

464. A Roman Executive Election—a Play in One Act.  
By Frederick Stewart, Eastern High School,  
Washington, D. C.
465. Suggestions for a Christmas Program for Latin Pupils. Adapted from material in the Service Bureau files. Price, 10 cents.

466. Roman and American Christmas Compared—a play in two acts. By Sarah McC. Lemmon, pupil in the High School, Johnson City, Tenn.
467. A Completion Test on the Content of Class Reading in Caesar, Book I.
468. Special Topics for the Caesar Class, Based on T. Rice Holmes' Caesar's Conquest of Gaul.

## II. Latin Notes Supplements

Fifty-one Supplements are ready for circulation. For titles and prices, see Leaflets I-IX.

## III. Bulletins

For titles and prices of previous Bulletins I-XXVII, see Leaflets I-IX. A reprint of Bulletin XII, The Latin Club, is available. Price, 45 cents.

## IV. Pictures

For 314 prints, classified by sets, see Leaflets VII and VIII. Price of prints, 5 cents each. Discounts for quantities.

Beautiful photographs of Pompeii, postcard size, taken by Tatiana Warsher, are on sale for 10 cents. A list will be sent upon request. For Alinari photographs from Rome, sold at the Bureau for 30 cents, see November NOTES.

## STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared FRANCES SABIN, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the editor of the LATIN NOTES, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, editor, managing editor, business manager—FRANCES E. SABIN, New York University, Washington Square East, 51 W. 4th St.

2. This leaflet is published by the Service Bureau for Classical Teachers which is supported by the American Classical League of which W. L. Carr is President, Teachers College, New York City. FRANCES SABIN is the Director of the Bureau.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: NONE.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities as so stated by him.

FRANCES E. SABIN

Sworn to and subscribed before me on Sept. 21, 1933

EARLE L. WASHBURN,

Commission Expires March 30, 1934